Please amend claim 1 as follows:

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1.   (Currently Amended) A method of playing a game, using a plurality of trading cards, each card designating a "game player", "game event" or other game-related feature for a specific game and having a unique identifier of alphanumeric characters associated therewith, said method comprising the steps of:

(a)   offering for ~~sale~~ use a limited set of trading cards, each card in the set having associated therewith a unique identifier of alphanumeric characters, each card also designating a game-related feature, there being a plurality of said game-related features designated by said cards in the set;

(b)   ~~selling~~ granting game playing rights to a subset of said set of trading cards to each of a plurality of card collectors, the game-related features designated by the cards of each subset forming a game playing "team" to be managed by the respective card collector;

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(c) registering with a game service provider selected ones of the cards from said subsets of cards, said cards being registered by their respective alphanumeric identifiers to said game provider, the collector of each subset thereby to placing the game-related features designated by the selected ones of the cards "in play";

(d) determining current information about each game-related feature in play;

(e) advancing the status of a game between the collectors whose game-related features are in play in accordance with the current information about such game-related features and in accordance with rules of the game; and

(f) changing the selected ones of the cards which are registered with the game service provider in an attempt to improve the chances of winning a game.

2. (Original) The method defined in claim 1, wherein no subset of said set of trading cards has a sequential set of identifiers of alphanumeric characters.

3. (Original) The method defined in claim 1, wherein groups of trading cards within said set designate the same game-related feature but each card within a group has a different identifier of alphanumeric characters.

4. (Original) The method defined in claim 3, wherein different ones of said groups of cards have different numbers of cards.

5. The method defined in claim 4, wherein at least one of said groups of cards has a number of cards which is less than the number of cards in each of the remaining groups, thereby increasing the scarcity value of this at least one group.

6. (Original) The method defined in claim 5, wherein the number of cards in said at least one group is in the range of 1 - 1000.

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7. (Original) The method defined in claim 1, wherein the identifier of alphanumeric characters for each card includes at least one alphanumeric character which represents a checksum of that identifier.

8. The method defined in claim 1, wherein the identifier on each card is represented in machine-readable form.

9. (Original) The method defined in claim 8, wherein the identifier on each card is represented as a bar code.

10. (Original) The method defined in claim 8, wherein the identifier on each card is represented as a magnetic stripe.

11. (Original) The method defined in claim 8, wherein the identifier on each card is represented in a microchip and wherein said microchip includes output means for reading the identifier.

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12. The method defined in claim 1, wherein the identifier on each card is encrypted, and wherein the method further includes the step of providing the game service provider with a decryption key.

13. (Original) The method defined in claim 1, wherein the game playing rights to said trading cards are sold to collectors together with their associated physical trading cards.

14. (Original) The method defined in claim 1, wherein the game playing right to said trading cards are sold to collectors independent of their associated physical trading cards.

15. (Original) The method defined in claim 1, wherein the game-related features include sports players who represent real persons.

16. (Original) The method defined in claim 15, wherein the persons are currently living.

17. (Original) The method defined in claim 1, wherein the game-related features include fictitious persons.

18. (Original) The method defined in claim 1, wherein the game-related features include fictitious characters.

19. (Original) The method defined in claim 1, wherein the game-related features include fictitious creatures.

20. (Original) The method defined in claim 1, wherein the game-related features include game events.